



School Leader Update

Iowa Department of Education

April 2006

Resources for Iowa School Leaders

NEWS FROM THE DE

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK:

New Board Members Appointed by Governor

Governor Vilsack has appointed two new members to the State Board of Education: Anne Jacqueline (Jackie) Dout, Senior Vice President and CFO, Pella Corporation; and N. Brian Gentry, an attorney with Wells Fargo in Des Moines. Jackie served on the Iowa Learns Council and has served on state and private college boards in various states, including a committee of academic and business people to align educational curriculum with business needs in Michigan. Prior to his work with Wells Fargo, Brian was in private practice and also served as General Counsel in Governor Vilsack's office. In that capacity he worked on issues related to bullying and harassment, achievement gaps, and overrepresentation of minorities who are incarcerated.

These new members will replace two current board members whose terms are expiring on April 30: Sally Frudden of Charles City and Greg McClain of Cedar Falls. Sally has been a member of the Board since 1993, serving as vice-president of the Board and on the Community College Council, along with other committee assignments. Greg has served since 1992, also serving as a member of the I-JAG Board and at the national level as a member of the NASBE Commission on High School Athletics in an Era of Reform.

Although it is impossible to list here all the contributions these two individuals have made over the years, both have provided valuable insight and expertise to the many policies the Board has studied and implemented – including teacher preparation, standards, and professional development; student achievement, safety, and transitions throughout the educational system; and community college programming. Sally is especially known for her passionate advocacy for quality early childhood programs, and Greg has been a strong advocate for high expectations for students, equity issues, and accountability.

Charlie Edwards, who has served on the Board since 2000, and whose term also expires April 30, was reappointed to the Board for a second term. The reappointment and the two new appointments must be confirmed by the Senate.

Our student member, Tara Richards, a senior graduating from Indianola High School, will also leave the Board at the end of April. We appreciate her unique perspective and her extra effort to set up an advisory board of students from across the state. The Governor is expected to appoint her replacement within the next several weeks.

DEADLINE APRIL 28: Taiwan Teaching Opportunities for the 06-07 School Year

The Iowa Department of Education recently signed an agreement with the Republic of China (Taiwan) that offers Iowa teachers endorsed in grades K-6 the opportunity to teach English language instruction for one year in a Taiwanese school. Through the agreement, up to 15 experienced and/or newly licensed Iowa teachers will be given this opportunity for the 2006-07 school year. The Taiwanese government will provide Iowa teachers with orientation training, housing arrangements, and salaries comparable to current Iowa teaching salaries.

Each participating Iowa teacher will be paired with a Taiwanese classroom teacher. In addition to providing English language instruction, the Iowa teachers will work with Taiwanese educators to develop curriculum, prepare lesson plans and teaching materials, conduct classes, and evaluate student progress.

Deadline for application is Friday, April 28, 2006. The Iowa Department of Education has formed a selection committee that will begin immediately accepting applications for these teaching opportunities. Iowa teachers

who are interested in the program should contact Jody Crane at 515/281-3333 or jody.crane@iowa.gov. Persons planning to apply for the Taiwan Teaching Opportunities must complete a background check with the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners. More detailed questions and answers and the application form is available at <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/taiwan/>.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The contact for all Legislative items is Jeff Berger, jeff.berger@iowa.gov; 515/281-3399.

Progress on DE Legislation and Educational Priorities

As the legislative process moves forward, progress on legislative priorities becomes more difficult to track as legislators and the Governor negotiate on the final package related to education. Most education policy bills did not survive the second funnel, but language in any of these bills could resurface in an appropriations or ways/means bill. Today, the Department of Education believes that there is still active conversation on the concepts contained in five of its seven prefiled bills: Educator Quality, 4-Year-Old Preschool, High School Reform, Sharing Incentives, and Miscellaneous Code Corrections (includes school start date language). You can find the language contained in those bills and many others at the DE's legislative website at <https://www.edinfo.state.ia.us/web/legisupdate.asp>. This website also gives you a quick view of what is moving and what is not.

Now more than ever, it is important for your legislators to know how you feel about the concepts contained in these bills. Advocacy packets for several of the issues are attached to this School Leader Update. Please consider making a call or attending a local forum to speak to them about necessary policy action that can still benefit schools, teachers, and students statewide. Legislator's contact information is available at <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/asp/Legislators/LegislatorInfo.aspx>.

Contact Jeff Berger, jeff.berger@iowa.gov or 515/281-3399 for more information.

Federal Budget continued concerns

The proposed federal budget reductions and eliminations would have a crippling impact on the quality of education in Iowa. Judy Jeffrey recently sent a letter to our Congressional delegation outlining our concerns. Visit <http://www.iowa.gov/educate/oofd/budget.html> for details. Federal funding for education under the President's proposed budget will be reduced nearly 6% when compared to the last two years. Please consider contacting your federal Senator or Representative to help them understand the potential impact of this proposal. Contact information for Senators and Representatives is available at <http://thomas.loc.gov/>.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Iowa Learning Online classes available for Summer and Fall '06

High School Credit class seats are currently available for summer and fall '06. Iowa Learning Online is designed to help local Iowa school districts access at-a-distance courses for students dealing with credit recovery, credit advancement, scheduling conflicts, or teacher shortages. Visit <http://iowalearningonline.org/classes.cfm> for more information about these classes. All credits earned will be awarded by the student's local school district.

Scholarship or free classes for the SUMMER include:

- American Gov & Politics
- American History
- English 9
- English 10
- World History

Scholarship or free classes for the FALL include:

- Advanced Senior Math
- American Gov & Politics
- American History
- Anatomy & Physiology

- Calculus
- Chemistry
- Physics
- World History

Tuition-based classes for the FALL include:

- AP Music Theory
- French I and II
- German I and II
- Visual Arts

College credit class information is available at http://iowalearningonline.org/cc_classes.cfm

NEEDED: Your Suggestions. ILO needs suggestions from schools about classes to add to selection, teachers available to offer classes, and methods of delivery.

WANTED: Schools to Offer Classes. ILO can help schools interested in sharing a course. ILO will provide the needed WebCT seats, pay your ICN video costs, provide an online registration system, and post your class on the ILO website.

For more information, contact Arlan Thorson, athorson@iowalearningonline.org, 515/238-4765.

Comparing NAEP and ITBS Results

Over the past six months, articles have been released from national organizations that compare the results on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) with the results on state tests, including the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS). The U.S. Department of Education National Assessment Governing Board document *"Using the National Assessment Educational Progress to Confirm State Test Results" (2002)* states, "Informed judgment and a 'reasonable person' standard should be applied in using National Assessment data as confirmatory evidence for state results. Confirmation should not be conducted on a 'point by point' basis or construed as a strict 'validation' of the state's test results (p.8)."

Caution always needs to be taken when scores from two different assessments are compared. NAEP and ITBS differ in many ways, including item format, students assessed, content coverage, content sequence, sampling procedures, rules for excluding students from testing, and standard-setting approaches. Care should also be taken when comparing the percent proficient on ITBS in a district to the percent of students passing another district assessment such as a MIALT or an ICAM assessment.

Additional information is available at <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/nclb/assessments.html>, or contact Dianne Chadwick at 515/281-3718 or dianne.chadwick@iowa.gov.

Promising Practices to Share: Find a Community Partner

The Iowa Automobile Dealers Association (IADA) has partnered with various education partners to help ensure a qualified workforce for the future. The IADA has provided professional development, instructional resources, consumable material, student scholarships, and financial contributions, and also has become a partner with Iowa SkillsUSA.

The Department of Education recognizes that partnerships with industry are essential for education to continue to meet the needs of Iowa future workforce. Additional partnerships have been established with other industry associations and companies such as the Associated Builders and Contractors of Iowa, Iowa Concrete Association, Masonry Institute of Iowa, Marshalltown Trowel, and the Iowa Home Builders Association. For additional information, contact Ken Maguire, 515/281-8353, ken.maguire@iowa.gov.

Learn Skills for Addressing and Resolving Differences

Conflict between families and educators is unavoidable in some situations, but that doesn't make it welcome. The Iowa Department of Education is committed to helping educators, family members, and others learn and use skills to address and resolve differences as early as possible. This will strengthen working relationships between families and educators, and ultimately improve student learning.

Since 1995 the Department has contracted with the Conflict Resolution Center of Iowa (formerly the Iowa Peace Institute) to provide training in introductory and advanced mediation skills for educators, creating solutions for parents, and the newest offering, RESPECT (Recognizing Everyone's Strengths by Peacebuilding, Empathizing, Communication and Trustbuilding). Costs to participants are minimal. There is no training fee, although sponsoring agencies often ask participants to pay the cost for meals and breaks. Participants or their agencies are responsible for their own travel expenses.

Several training programs have been scheduled for 2006. Additional trainings will be scheduled when school districts and/or AEAs desire them. The programs and contacts are listed below. Note that enrollment is based on slots being available:

Introductory Mediation Training (four days)

- Green Valley AEA 14 in Creston: May 30-31 and June 12-13
Contact Emily Selsor at 641/782-8443
- Heartland AEA 11: Summer '06 dates to be announced.
Contact Steve Iverson at 515/270-9030; 800/362-2720

RESPECT (a four-day program for educators and parents)

- AEA 8 in Storm Lake: April 5 & 25, May 15 & June 8
Contact Dedie Thompson at 712/336-1331; 800/669-2325

Advanced Mediation Training

- AEA 267 in Cedar Falls: April 2, 3, 10, & 11
Contact Carol Sensor at 319/273-8250; 800/542-8375

Trainings scheduled 06-07

RESPECT (a four-day program for educators and parents)

- Grant Wood AEA 10 in Cedar Rapids: September 19, October 12, November 20, and December 13 (January 18, 2007, is a snow date if needed)
Contact Leslee Sandberg at 319/399-6802

For further information on how your agency can secure DE funding for a conflict resolution training program at your location, or for an electronic brochure describing the various programs, please contact Dee Ann Wilson, 515/281-5766, Deeann.wilson@iowa.gov.

For additional information on the training or to schedule a program, contact the Conflict Resolution Center of Iowa (CRCI). Note that if districts want to offer the training, each district will need to work through its AEA, with the AEA submitting the required paperwork. Contact CRCI president Greg Buntz at 641/236-3939, buntz@iowatelecom.net or by mail at PO Box 925, Grinnell 50112.

Sustained Silent Reading: Getting Student Benefits

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), sometimes known as Drop Everything and Read (DEAR), is a literacy component of some schools' curricula. Districts see this component as an opportunity to provide additional time for students to read for the purpose of improving student achievement and establishing the lifelong habit of reading. Although actual implementation of SSR models varies from district to district, all models involve students selecting texts and reading during school.

Researchers contend that having scheduled time for students to read can increase reading skills and positively affect student attitudes toward reading, but not all researchers endorse SSR as a research-supported strategy. The National Reading Panel (2000) raised several concerns. The Panel's contention is that with minimal teacher guidance and feedback, SSR has not been shown to improve achievement or fluency. (The panel did not conclude that children did not need reading practice, only that how this might be best accomplished is an open question.)

Should instructional time be devoted to voluntary reading programs such as SSR or DEAR? A review of the research indicates that the following suggestions may strengthen SSR programs and make them viable components of an effective literacy program:

- **Access to materials.** Students should have access to a variety of reading materials that are appropriate for their reading level and in content. It is not simply enough for the teacher to tell a student to bring a book to read. The teacher must support the student in securing appropriate reading materials.

- **Collaborative reading environment.** The classroom environment needs to be one that not only allows students to read silently but also to engage socially with their peers and teachers in talking about what they've read.
- **Role of the teacher.** Teachers should model healthy reading habits by engaging students in conferences and small group discussions about what they're reading. Teachers may wish to encourage other adults in the school or parents to promote this social interaction about reading. Students should also be provided opportunities to journal about what they are reading.
- **Time to read.** Miller (2002) recommends that sustained silent reading periods be 15 to 20 minutes at least twice a week. Research has shown that fewer opportunities that are of longer length are less beneficial than frequent shorter periods. At the elementary level, SSR needs to occur outside of the 90-minute uninterrupted reading block.

Districts and schools are encouraged to actively review SSR programs in light of the lessons learned through research. If students are provided with access to quality materials, the reading environment is supportive of the collaborative nature of reading, teachers model and support healthy reading habits, and students are given adequate time to read, SSR can be one tool among many used to enhance reading achievement and fluency.

For additional information contact Rita Martens 515/281-3145 or rita.martens@iowa.gov.

Bioscience/Biotechnology Focus Groups

A series of bioscience/biotechnology focus groups, funded by the Department of Education and hosted by various community colleges around the state, are being held this Spring to discuss the capacity of Iowa's educational institutions to meet Iowa's current and future bioscience/biotechnology workforce. Individuals invited to these focus groups are:

- Middle and high school science teachers
- Community college bioscience and biotechnology instructors
- High school and community college administrators
- University science teacher preparation program representatives
- University and college bioscience and biotech program instructors and administrators
- Representatives of Iowa's biotech industries and employers
- Department of Education, pre-K-12, and community college administrators and consultants
- University/college researchers in cutting edge bioscience and biotech-related areas that have the capacity to influence the future economic development.

The emphasis of the focus groups centers on the preparedness of high school graduates to enter and be successful in post-secondary bioscience/biotechnology programs, and how to encourage young adults to pursue careers in these fields. In addition, employers are asked to help identify the skill sets needed of their employees. Also, the groups look at the capacity of our postsecondary institutions to deliver in-service opportunities to high school science teachers in the "new" work of science.

The goal is to begin discussions that will facilitate program linkages and professional development possibilities for faculty at both the high school and community college levels.

For additional information, contact Roger Utman, 515/281-3582, roger.utman@iowa.gov.

QUALITY TEACHING

Summer Seminars for Educators of English Language Learners

Three "Our Kids" seminars for educators of English Language Learners will be August 7-11, 2006, at Iowa State University in Ames. Details about each seminar are presented in the "Our Kids" attachments.

The seminars are Enhancing Math and Science Education for Iowa's English Language Learners; More English Language Learners Are Joining Your Class - Are You Ready?; and Guiding the Implementation of Dual Language Programs in Iowa's Schools.

Questions about the seminars should be directed to Marcia H. Rosenbusch, Director, K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center: mrosenbu@iastate.edu or 515-294-6699 or Holly Kaptain, Research Assistant, hkaptain@iastate.edu or 515/294-9413.

Board of Educational Examiners Announces New Reminder Service

The Board of Educational Examiners is now sending electronic reminders of imminent expiration of certain licenses. Holders of Initial, Standard, Master Educator, and Administrator licenses will be sent an email indicating that one of their licenses will soon expire. Holders of a Class B or Class C (Conditional Licenses) will not be notified.

The email reminders will be sent out twice. The first reminder will be sent approximately one year before the date of expiration of the license; the second reminder will be sent approximately two months before the date of expiration of the license.

Only those practitioners for whom the BoEE has a current and correct email address will receive this reminder.

How to check or update your email address

In order to receive a reminder, a practitioner must make certain that the Board of Educational Examiners has his or her current email address. In order to check or update your own email address, please visit the BoEE website (www.state.ia.us/boee).

- Click on the third box in the upper line of boxes on the page (“Order a Duplicate of Your License or Update License Information”).
- You will be directed to an information page that states that if you make any changes in address, phone number, etc., you must click the “UPDATE” box or the changes will not take effect. Then click continue.
- Click “Log on as Practitioner” on the left side of the page. You will need three pieces of information to log on: Folder Number (You will find it printed near the bottom of your license.), Social Security Number, Month and Year of Birth.
- Update any field to which changes need to be made.
- Click Update.

Whether practitioners receive a reminder or not, it is still each practitioner’s responsibility to take note of the expiration date printed on the license and to renew the license prior to that date. A late fee of \$25 per month will be assessed if the practitioner is found to be practicing with an expired license.

High School Summit Electronic Handouts and Power Points

Anyone interested in obtaining additional copies of the handouts provided or power points used in the various sessions may go to <http://www.iowaaea.org/highschool> and download those that are of interest to you. Once there, go to Tools and Resources for the documents and links related to the summit.

Questions? Contact Warren K. Weber at warren.weber@iowa.gov.

Iowa Evaluator Approval Training

The DE has proposed as part of the Teacher Quality legislation that the evaluator approval *renewal training* be offered by the Department of Education beginning in fall 2007. This training will apply to the renewal of the evaluator’s license.

The renewal training will result in each participant earning two (2) staff development credits. SAI will continue to be a partner in this project, and they will provide two staff development credits upon the successful completion of the training.

To renew both the new evaluator’s license and an administrative endorsement still requires four (4) credits. As a result, any person wanting to renew both the evaluator’s license and their administrative endorsement will have to obtain two (2) credits from the renewal training *and* two (2) additional credits from other sources by the time the current license expires. The additional credits can be a combination of AEA licensure renewal credits and/or university credits.

Administrators with current evaluator’s license/administrative endorsement should review the expiration date. It may be useful to plan back from the date in order to know how much time is available to acquire the two (2) evaluator renewal training credits (beginning Fall 2007) and the two (2) other credits needed, in order to be prepared to apply for a renewal of the new evaluator’s license/administrative endorsement on time.

The two (2) credits of evaluator approval renewal training in combination with two (2) other licensure renewal and/or graduate credits will allow for the renewal of the evaluator’s license and an administrative endorsement.

When the training begins, priority will again be given to those people who have current and direct responsibility for evaluating licensed personnel, including teachers with initial licenses, career teachers, and coaches, and will be based on the date of expiration of administrators evaluating current evaluator's license.

An update will be provided once legislative decisions are final. Please direct questions to Warren Weber, warren.weber@iowa.gov.

Superintendent's Evaluator License a Possibility

Currently the Department of Education, School Administrators of Iowa, and the Iowa Wallace Grant are working with one another to investigate the possibility of a separate evaluator training for superintendents. The focus of that training will be on the Iowa Leadership Standards and the Superintendent's responsibility for the evaluation of principals. More details will be available as the work continues this spring. There have been two meetings of an advisory group made up of superintendents who have provided very useful input on the curriculum, the delivery system, and how the training should be assessed.

Contact Warren Weber at warren.weber@iowa.gov with any questions.

LEGAL LESSONS

The contact for all Legal Lessons items is Carol Greta, carol.greta@iowa.gov; 515/281-8661.

School Employee Physicals

Yes, the rule – 12.4(10) – was changed. Effective January 11, 2006, local boards “shall require each employee to file with the local board, after an offer of employment is made and before or within six weeks of the beginning of service, certification of fitness to perform the tasks assigned which shall be in the form of a written report of a physical examination by a licensed physician and surgeon, osteopathic physician and surgeon, osteopath, or qualified doctor of chiropractic, licensed physician assistant, or advanced registered nurse practitioner.”

No more “every 3 year” examinations and no more TB tests as part of the initial physical.

The rule for bus drivers is currently in the process of being amended to remove the TB test from their physical exam also, but that rule change will be effective July 26, 2006, at the earliest. Bus drivers still must have a physical every two years. Bus drivers who are insulin-dependent diabetics must have an annual physical.

Student Disciplinary Records

As part of NCLB, all states are required to assure the federal government that they have a state law to mandate that a student's disciplinary record follows the student to any new school. In Iowa the assurance is via Iowa Code section 279.9A. This law requires that “an accurate record of any suspension or expulsion actions taken, and the basis for those actions taken,” be reported to a school to which the student transfers or seeks to transfer. This section applies to both nonpublic schools and districts.

This agency's interpretation of 279.9A is that all expulsions and out-of-school suspensions must be reported. It is left to the discretion of the school or school district that imposes an in-school suspension whether to include such disciplinary records in what it sends to the student's next school.

Two Cases of First Impression from State Board Break New Ground

1. Guidelines for Open Enrollment based on Serious Health Need

For several years now, Iowa Code section 282.18(5) has been the mechanism for families to use to open enroll out of a resident district after the March 1 deadline if their child has been the victim of repeated acts of harassment or if the child has a serious health condition that the resident district cannot adequately address. While the State Board of Education has dealt with cases involving repeated acts of harassment, it recently decided an appeal for the first time that involved a child with a serious health need.

As a reminder, the guidelines for districts to use (and that the State Board will use) to determine whether a late-filed open enrollment request based on a claim of repeated acts of harassment should be approved are:

- The harassment must have happened after March 1, or the extent of the problem must not have been known until after March 1;
- The harassment must be beyond typical adolescent cruelty;

- The evidence of harassment must be specific;
- The evidence must show that the harassment is likely to continue;
- School officials, upon notification of the harassment, must have worked without success to resolve the situation; and
- There must be reason to think that changing the student's school district will alleviate the situation.

And the **NEW** guidelines for districts to implement in determining whether to approve a late-filed open enrollment request based on a child's alleged serious health need are:

- The serious health condition of the child is one that has been diagnosed as such by a licensed physician, osteopathic physician, doctor of chiropractic, licensed physician assistant, or advanced registered nurse practitioner, and this diagnosis has been provided to the school district.
- The child's serious health condition is not of a short-term or temporary nature.
- The district has been provided with the specifics of the child's health needs caused by the serious health condition. From this, the district knows or should know what specific steps its staff can take to meet the health needs of the child.
- School officials, upon notification of the serious health condition and the steps it could take to meet the child's needs, must have failed to implement the steps or, despite the district's best efforts, its implementation of the steps was unsuccessful.
- A reasonable person could not have known before March 1 that the district could not or would not adequately address the child's health needs.
- It can be reasonably anticipated that a change in the child's school district will improve the situation.

In this case, the State Board determined that the resident district could have taken steps to meet the child's serious health need, but failed to do so. (The required step was periodically reminding the child, who had a short-term processing deficiency, to use the bathroom.) Therefore, the local board's decision to deny open enrollment was reversed. A summary and the full text of the new case regarding an open enrollment request based on a serious health need is found at www.edinfo.state.ia.us/web/appeals.asp?book=24&decision=5.

2. Enrollment/Placement of a Resident Student on the Sex Offender Registry (SOR)

The other first-time case involved an appeal from a local board's decision to provide a student on the SOR with an education in an alternative setting and not with the rest of the student population. The local board decided to provide tutoring to the high school boy after regular school hours at the middle school attendance center. The reasons the board decided not to allow the young man to be educated with the regular population were: (1) the elementary children and high school students were all housed in the same attendance center, (2) the victim of the student's sexual abuse was a younger student, and (3) the student was new to the district so the board was simply not sure how he and the other students would get along.

The local board met and made its decision per Iowa Code section 282.9, enacted two years ago. The law requires the board of a district, upon notification that a resident student is on the SOR, to meet and "determine the educational placement of the student." The statute goes on to state:

"The tentative agenda for the meeting of the board of directors at which the board will consider such enrollment or educational placement shall specifically state that the board is considering the enrollment or educational placement of an individual who is required to register as a sex offender under chapter 692A. If the individual is denied enrollment in a school district under this section, the school district of residence shall provide the individual with educational services in an alternative setting."

The legislature did not provide any criteria for the local board to use in making these decisions. Therefore, the State Board decided that it was not unreasonable for the local board to take into consideration the safety of *all* students, including the student on the SOR. The local board's decision was upheld. A local board should state the reasons for its decision and why the board believes its decision to be reasonable.

NOTE also that such board meetings nearly inevitably involve discussion of confidential records, and may, therefore, be conducted in closed session per Iowa Code section 21.5(1)(a).

A summary and the full text of the new case is a <https://www.edinfo.state.ia.us/web/appeals.asp?book=23&decision=340>.

Guidance on New Athletic Eligibility Rule

The language of the new "scholarship" rule, as adopted by the State Board on March 2, is (new language is in italics):

36.15(2) Scholarship rules. ...

c. All contestants shall be enrolled students of the school in good standing. *They shall receive credit in at least four subjects, each of one period or "hour" or the equivalent thereof, at all times.* To qualify under this rule, a "subject" must meet the requirements of 281—Chapter 12. Coursework taken under the provisions of Iowa Code chapter 261C, postsecondary *enrollment* options, for which a school district or accredited nonpublic school grants academic credit toward high school graduation shall be used in determining eligibility. *No student shall be denied eligibility if the student's school program deviates from the traditional two-semester school year.*

(1) *Each contestant shall be passing all coursework for which credit is given and shall be making adequate progress toward graduation requirements at the end of each grading period. Grading period, graduation requirements, and any interim periods of ineligibility are determined by local policy. For purposes of this subrule, "grading period" shall mean the period of time at the end of which a student in grades 9 through 12 receives a final grade and course credit is awarded for passing grades.*

(2) *Subject to the provision below regarding contestants in interscholastic baseball or softball, if at the end of any grading period a contestant is given a failing grade in any course for which credit is awarded, the contestant is ineligible to dress for and compete in the next occurring interscholastic athletic contests and competitions in which the contestant is a bona fide contestant for 20 consecutive school days. For purposes of this subrule, a "bona fide contestant" means a student who presently is or previously has competed in the interscholastic athletic activity to which the student's period of ineligibility herein applies. This definition shall not apply to a student in the ninth grade.*

(3) *At the end of a grading period that is the final grading period in a school year, a bona fide contestant in interscholastic baseball or softball who receives a failing grade in any course for which credit is awarded is ineligible to dress for and compete in interscholastic baseball or softball for the four consecutive weeks following the end of the final grading period.*

The final hearing on the above changes before the Legislature's Administrative Rules Review Committee is scheduled for April 10 at 8:10 a.m. The Department of Education does not believe that there will be any further changes. It is most likely that the changed rule will go into effect July 1, 2006. Therefore, the first grading periods to be affected by the change will be fall of 2006. In other words, if a student does not pass all coursework at the end of the present school year, any period of ineligibility is left to local rules. (The only exception is a student who fails to meet the current state standard of "pass four." That student will be ineligible for softball/baseball AND the entire fall semester of 2006.)

See the attached Guidance on New Athletic Eligibility Rules for additional information, including Frequently Asked Questions.

DATA MANAGEMENT

Remember to Update Email Contact Lists

All local district employees are encouraged to review email contact and distribution lists to ensure they are sending to the new DE addresses (first.name.last.name@iowa.gov) rather than the previous email extension (@ed.state.ia.us).

STUDENT HEALTH AND NUTRITION

ICN Sessions Scheduled for Pandemic Flu Information

The Iowa Dept. of Public Health and the DE will host three ICN sessions in April to provide essential pandemic flu information to school district personnel. The sessions are specifically designed for superintendents and will include facts about pandemic influenza and guidelines and tools for planning for a flu outbreak.

Public health officials believe:

- Some form of pandemic flu will reach the United States within the next 12 months,
- An outbreak could affect a large percentage of school staff and/or students,
- Each affected individual could be ill for weeks rather than days, and
- The outbreak itself could last months.

Districts must work with county and other local health officials to have a plan that outlines the schools' roles in continuing to educate students during an outbreak, and in serving the community in other ways (for instance, as a shelter or food provider).

Superintendents should plan to attend one of the these ICN sessions:

- Monday, April 17, from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.
- Monday, April 17, from 3:15 – 4:15 p.m.
- Monday, April 24 from 10:00 – 11:00.

NEWS FROM OTHER STATE AGENCIES

Summer Reading Club

The Iowa Library for the Blind will host a Summer Reading Club from June 12 - July 21, 2006. Any registered library borrower ages 3-18 is welcome to participate in this summer event filled with contests, activities, book discussions, and nifty prizes. The theme for this year's program – "Paws, Claws, Scales and Tales," – has a broad-based animal/pet focus. The Iowa Library for the Blind serves persons who are blind, visually impaired, physically handicapped, or reading disabled. To learn more about available services, call 515/281-1333 or 800/363-2587 and ask for Deena Cross or Carol Eckey.

CALENDAR

Deadlines and [Dates to Remember](#)

The K-12 Critical Due Dates Calendar is at <http://www.iowa.gov/educate/calendars/critical.html>

April 17	Pandemic Flu ICN session	2:00 – 3:00 p.m.
April 17	Pandemic Flu ICN session	3:15 – 4:15 pm.
April 24	Pandemic Flue ICN session	10:00-11:00 a.m.
April 28	Deadline for Teaching in Taiwan application	

SCHOOL LEADER UPDATE is produced monthly by the Iowa Department of Education for school leaders of Iowa. Comments and submissions should be sent to Kathi Slaughter, 515/281-5651, kathi.slaughter@iowa.gov.